

Practice Intake Call

Scenario 1

Caseworker

A local NGO working in WASH activities discovered a possible case of child labor during a visit to a warehouse. They are referring to you Ali, an 8-year-old boy who appeared to be working as porter at the warehouse, which stocks building materials. He reported dropping out of school recently because his father had lost his job at a restaurant during the pandemic. The NGO mentioned that it was particularly concerned about the loads Ali was carrying and that he did not have any personal protective equipment against COVID. As the caseworker, you have been provided with the father's name and phone number. His name is Mohammed Ali, and you were advised to call around 7 p.m., as that is when you will find both the father and son at home. You make the call with the goal of conducting an intake interview, which will determine whether the case meets the criteria for case management services.

Mohammed Ali, Ali's Father

You confirm that you are Ali's father. You are quite angry that a stranger is calling you at a time when you are normally having dinner with your family. At the start of the call, you give the caseworker little chance to speak. You repeat to the caller that you don't know them, that you have heard that there are a lot of scams of this kind and that you would like to get back to your dinner. If the caseworker shows understanding and allows you to express your feelings, you can let them explain who they are and what they are calling about, and gradually calm down. You explain that you have been in Lebanon for 5 years as a refugee and that, yes, Ali did drop out of school because you had lost your job as a waiter in a restaurant due to COVID. Ali's job is now the family's only source of income, but you are actively looking for a job. You have 3 other children: Hadeya, who is 3; Samir, who is 5; and Abdi, who is 9. Abdi is still in school, but you don't know if you will be able to sustain this for long if no other source of income is found. So, at the moment you need Ali to support the family. Ali's mother would also engage in some form of work, but she has never worked before and she needs to take care of the children. The caseworker cannot speak to Ali right now, as he has not yet returned from the warehouse. You agree to arrange a call at a suitable time when the caseworker can speak to both you and Ali, and you provide all the details to facilitate the registration.

Scenario 2

Caseworker

A nurse at a local health post contacted you after a 1-year-old baby was brought in by her mother for a high fever. The health condition itself was not worrying, but the nurse decided to file a referral because she suspected that violence may be occurring at home, given that the baby had some suspicious-looking bruises on her legs and forearms. The child's name is Dina Deng, and she lives in an IDP camp near the health post. The mother seemed to be very caring, and accepted the referral to you for an informal chat. The mother's name is Lila Sim Deng, and she agreed to be called at 7 p.m. You make the call with the goal of conducting an intake interview, which will determine whether the case meets the criteria for case management services.

Lila Sim Deng, Dina's mother

During the call, you explain that, yes, Dina is doing better. She has started eating a bit more, and her fever broke after she took the prescribed antibiotics. But life is not easy at the camp. The household currently

includes you; Dina; and 3 siblings of 5, 3 and 2 years of age. The father is away, and will return in a few weeks, as he has gone off to look after their cattle. Since the onset of the pandemic, things have become more complicated: your family has lost income opportunities and your husband has become increasingly stressed by all the children being at home, given that the schools are closed. After a while, you start crying. If the caseworker shows an understanding of your feelings, you explain that, while your husband is normally a very caring dad, lately he has been losing his patience with the children, and has hit them. You say that you tried talking to him, but that led to a huge fight just before he had to leave for weeks. You add that you have asked the children to be quiet when their father is around, but children will be children. You hope that the father's time away will help him reflect on what he has done, and that your family will find a way to cope with their hardships. You are unsure if there is anything else you could do.

Scenario 3

Caseworker

Amina is a 15-year-old girl referred to you by a friend of hers who would like to stay anonymous. The friend had learned from Amina that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, her parents are no longer capable of meeting the family's basic needs and, for this reason, were thinking that the best option for Amina would be to get married as soon as possible. Amina and her friends are part of a girls' group in their community. Through the group, they are involved in a lot of awareness-raising activities, and Amina was counting on entering a vocational training course soon. Amina's friend suggested that you contact Amina's mother, Samira Hussein, and she gave you the contact details. She was unsure about the best time to call Amina's family. You make the call with the goal of conducting an intake interview, which will determine whether the case meets the criteria for case management services.

Samira Hussein, Amina's mother

You are very reluctant to talk to the caseworker, as you have no idea why they are calling. You insist that you have not called for help, and that you are very busy at the moment. If the caseworker provides an opportunity to chat, you slowly start to provide more information. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, your family has lost its major source of income. Apart from Amina, you have to take care of 4 other children. The younger children have all been attending school, and Amina herself has completed middle school. You have managed to make ends meet with income from your husband and some seasonal farm work that you have been doing. While neither you nor your husband feels it is a great idea, you see Amina's marriage as the only option for giving her a better life. You hope that the other children will be able to continue their schooling, and that the economy will somehow pick up again, so that your family can go back to living on your husband's salary as a skilled gardener. You tell the caseworker that Amina is not available to talk at the moment, as she is out fetching water, but she will be back later. By the end of the call, you are okay with the idea of continuing to have conversations with the caseworker and with allowing the caseworker to speak with Amina the next time, but you disagree with the caseworker's view that marriage is no solution.

Observer Card

Even if you are able to physically see the caseworker during the call, it is important that you focus particularly on the conversation with the child/caregiver. Listen carefully to what is happening during the call, and remain silent throughout. Note down anything you hear that you think was helpful in getting the person to talk or in fulfilling the purpose of the intake call, but also note down things that were not so helpful. Below is a set of questions to help you guide your reflections. The question list is not exhaustive:

- What is the caseworker's tone of voice like?
- Is the caseworker speaking too quickly?
- Has the caseworker introduced herself/himself and the organization/mandate well?
- Has the caseworker striven to build a rapport with the interlocutor?
- Has the caseworker gained the assent and consent from the caregiver and/or child?
- Has the caseworker explained confidentiality?
- Has the caseworker used active listening throughout the call to better understand the situation of the child and/or caregiver?
- Has the caseworker been responsive to the child's and caregiver's emotions, and made an attempt to better understand them?
- Has the caseworker properly agreed with the clients on a way forward, including the date and time of the next call?
- Has the caseworker provided a phone number to be reachable at any time?

This list of questions is not an exhaustive one. It is only meant to give you a sense of the kinds of feedback you should be giving. Don't feel compelled to observe all of the above during the call.

When providing feedback, answer any questions the caseworker might have, but if there are no further questions, limit yourself to 2 points of feedback.

One of those two points should be positive, while the other should refer to something the caseworker needs to improve.

To formulate the positive feedback, you can use such expressions as: "During the call, you had a very reassuring tone of voice and you were able to appropriately handle the emotion of the child by listening and validating their emotions."

To formulate the constructive feedback, you can use expressions such as: "It would be great if you could work on wrapping up the call more effectively by being clearer about the next step and how you can be contacted."

After giving the positive feedback, do not introduce the constructive feedback with a "but." Take any questions that the case worker might have but if there are not further questions limit yourself to the 2 pieces of feedback.